

Message Text

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15

ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-14 AF-10 ARA-16 EA-11 EUR-25 RSC-01

ACDA-19 CIAE-00 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 SCI-06

FEA-02 AEC-11 AECE-00 PM-07 SP-03 SS-20 DODE-00

NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PRS-01 SAJ-01 DRC-01

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O R 210920Z MAY 74

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 838

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USLO PEKING

USMISSION GENEVA

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

S E C R E T HONG KONG 5706

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PARM, TECH, IN

SUBJECT: INDIAN NUCLEAR TESTING

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REF: STATE 104647

SUMMARY: PEKING PROBABLY WILL NOT TAKE THE LEAD IN OPPOSING INDIA'S NUCLEAR TESTING NOR ALTER ITS OWN PROGRAM BECAUSE OF IT. VERY LIKELY THE CHINESE CALCULATE THAT THE TEST WILL NOT IN THE NEAR-TERM SIGNIFICANTLY CHANGE THE BALANCE OF NUCLEAR POWER OR THREATEN CHINA. THE IMMEDIATE POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS, HOWEVER, ARE WORRISOME. PEKING WILL BE RELUCTANT TO EXTEND A NUCLEAR UMBRELLA OVER PAKISTAN OR TO ASSIST PAKISTAN IN DEVELOPING ITS OWN PEACEFUL NUCLEAR PROGRAM. TO PLACATE THE PAKS, HOWEVER, THE PRC MAY PROPOSE CAUTIOUS ALTERNATIVES. END SUMMARY.

1. NCNA, MAY 19, CARRIED A BRIEF REPORT WITHOUT COMMENT ON THE INDIAN "NUCLEAR EXPLOSION EXPERIMENT." THE ARTICLE DID NOT CARRY THE OFFICIAL INDIAN CHARACTERIZATION OF THE EXPERIMENT AS "PEACEFUL," BUT UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, WE DOUBT PEKING WILL TAKE THE LEAD IN OPPOSING INDIA'S TESTING PROGRAM. IT WILL HOWEVER PUBLICIZE PAKISTAN AND OTHER THIRD PARTY ADVERSE REACTION.

2. ON MAY 20, FOR EXAMPLE, NCNA CARRIED A SHORT AND RELATIVELY TONED-DOWNED ACCOUNT OF PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO'S MAY 19 PRESS CONFERENCE ON THE SUBJECT. THE REPORT OMITTED REFERENCE TO BHUTTO'S "POLITICAL COUNTERMEASURES" INCLUDING HIS ASSERTION THAT HE WOULD APPEAL TO THE PERMANENT MEMBERS OF THE UNSC FOR A PLEDGE OF PROTECTION AND THAT HE AND FOREIGN SECRETARY AGHA SHAHI WOULD MAKE "URGENT APPROACHES" TO THE CAPITALS CONCERNED, INCLUDING PEKING (LAHORE 731). NCNA ALSO DID NOT REPORT BHUTTO'S STATEMENT ABOUT THE "DIRE NECESSITY" FOR PAKISTAN TO HAVE AN "ACCELERATED AND COHERENT NUCLEAR PROGRAM FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES" AND THAT COUNTRIES THAT REFUSED TO ASSIST WOULD BE CONSIDERED UNFRIENDLY.

3. NEWS OF THE EXPLOSION IS AN UNWELCOME COMPLICATION TO CHINA'S PRESENT DIPLOMATIC GOALS IN SOUTH ASIA. CURRENTLY THE PRC IS PAINTING A POSITIVE PICTURE OF THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION IN THE SUBCONTINENT AND DOWNPLAYING INDIA'S THREAT TO ITS NEIGHBORS. PEKING IS ALSO AVOIDING CHARGES OF INDIAN HOSTILITY TOWARDS CHINA. AS WE REPORTED

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EARLIER, THE PRC IS NOW SEEKING TO TEMPER SINO-INDIAN CONFRONTATION AND TO ENCOURAGE A RENEWED MOVEMENT TOWARD IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONS (HONG KONG 3259). MOST RECENTLY, THIS ORIENTATION WAS REFLECTED IN CHINESE STATEMENTS DURING BHUTTO'S VISIT TO PEKING (HONG KONG 5297). A SHARP CAMPAIGN BY THE PRC AGAINST INDIA'S NUCLEAR TEST WOULD RUN COUNTER TO THIS TREND.

4. INDIA'S SUCCESSFUL EXPLOSION WILL PROBABLY HAVE NO DIRECT EFFECT ON PEKING'S OWN NUCLEAR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PLANS. THE PRC, OF COURSE, HAS LONG BEEN INTENT ON BUILDING A SECOND-STRIKE CAPABILITY AS A DETERRENT AGAINST U.S. OR SOVIET NUCLEAR INTIMIDATION OR ATTACK. THE CHINESE PROBABLY DO NOT CALCULATE THAT THE INDIAN BREAKTHROUGH WILL IN THE NEAR-TERM BRING ABOUT SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN THE BALANCE OF NUCLEAR POWER OR POSE A THREAT TO CHINA. IN THE LONGER-TERM, IF THE INDIAN PROGRAM SHOULD EXPAND, THE PRC WOULD NATURALLY ALTER ITS TARGETING PLANS TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF ANY INDIAN CAPABILITY TO HIT CHINA.

5. MORE IMMEDIATELY WORRISOME ARE THE POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF NEW DELHI'S ACHIEVEMENT. ON THE POSITIVE SIDE THE INDIAN TEST MAY TAKE SOME THIRD WORLD CRITICISM AND PRESSURE OFF CHINA FOR ITS OWN TESTING PROGRAM. THE SUCCESSFUL EXPLOSION IN RAJASTHAN, HOWEVER, UNDERSCORES INDIA'S MILITARY PRE-EMINENCE IN THE SUBCONTINENT AND WILL POSSIBLY BOOST INDIA'S CONFIDENCE IN ITS DEALINGS WITH CHINA. PEKING WILL PROBABLY CALCULATE THAT THESE EFFECTS WILL BE MARGINAL AND UNLIKELY TO STIMULATE INDIA INTO ADVENTUROUS ACTS AT LEAST FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS. THE PROBLEM FOR THE PRC WILL BE IN RESPONDING TO PAKISTAN'S SENSE OF INSECURITY AND SPECIFICALLY ITS REQUESTS FOR NUCLEAR GUARANTEES OF SOME SORT AND ASSISTANCE IN PRODUCING ITS OWN "PEACEFUL"EXPLOSION.

6. IN MEETING THIS SITUATION PEKING WILL WANT TO REASSURE PAKISTAN WITHOUT STIRRING UP CONFRONTATION IN THE SUBCONTINENT OR IN SINO-INDIAN AFFAIRS. ALSO, THE CHINESE WILL NOT WANT TO ASSOCIATE THEMSELVES IN ANY WAY WITH THE SUPERPOWERS IN A MULTILATERAL GUARANTEE. CONSEQUENTLY WE EXPECT THE CHINESE WILL TRY TO DISCOURAGE THE PAKS FROM PURSUING THEIR APPROACH TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL OR FROM SEEKING ADHERENCE OF THE
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PERMANENT MEMBERS TO A MULTILATERAL DECLARATION OF INTENT TO DETER OTHERS FROM NUCLEAR WAR. THE PRC, HOPING TO PLACATE THE PAKS, MIGHT AGREE TO MAKE A VAGUE STATMENT SUGGESTING CHINA'S SUPPORT FOR PAKISTAN AGAINST NUCLEAR INTIMIDATION OR BLACKMAIL. PEKING WOULD ALSO PROBABLY WELCOME SIMILAR BUCKING UP OF PAK CONFIDENCE BY THE U.S. AND CENTO AND CONSIDER THIS APPROACH MORE EFFECTIVE THAN SERIOUS MEASURES TO TRY DIRECTLY TO SANCTION INDIA.

7. THE PRC, OF COURSE, HAS DENOUNCED THE NPT AND THE NUCLEAR TEST BAN TREATY AND UPHELD THE RIGHT OF ALL COUNTRIES TO DEVELOP NUCLEAR WEAPONS--PROVIDED, OF COURSE, THEIR INTENTIONS ARE NOT AGGRESSIVE AS DEFINED BY CHINA. AFTER MUCH BADGERING BY SUKARNO FOR NUCLEAR ASSISTANCE, PEKING IN 1965 DECLARED THAT IT WAS UP TO EACH COUNTRY TO

DEVELOP THESE WEAPONS ON THEIR OWN. THE CHINESE WE BELIEVE WILL BE RELUCTANT TO OPEN PANDOR'S BOX AND ABANDON THIS POSITION. DIRECT PRC ASSISTANCE WOULD INVITE SIMILAR REQUESTS FROM OTHERS IN THE FUTURE AND INEVITABLY INVOLVE A NET OF RESPONSIBILITIES AND COMMITMENTS IN A NUCLEAR CONTEXT WHICH THE PRC HAS NO DESIRE TO ASSUME. HOWEVER IF PRESSED BY THE PAKS, THE CHINESE MIGHT AGREE TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL TRAINING ON NUCLEAR RESEARCH TO PAK SCIENTISTS.

8. ANOTHER DISTURBING IMPLICATION FOR CHINA IS THE ENCOURAGEMENT WHICH THE INDIAN TEST MIGHT GIVE TO JAPAN TO KEEP OPEN ITS NUCLEAR OPTION (TOKYO 6566). A STRONGLY NEGATIVE REACTION FROM PEKING TO THE INDIAN PROGRAM, HOWEVER, WOULD NOT NECESSARILY PROMOTE CONTINUED ABSTINENCE IN JAPAN AND WOULD PROBABLY BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE WITH INDIA. LIKEWISE ANY DIRECT CHINESE ASSISTANCE TO PAKISTAN THREATENING FURTHER TO PROLIFERATE NUCLEAR CAPABILITIES WOULD PRESUMABLY HAVE AN UNDESIRABLE EFFECT ON TOKYO. CROSS

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